

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO ENTER INTO FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE SULTANATE OF OMAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 109-60)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002, (Public Law 107-210) (the "Trade Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intention to enter into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Sultanate of Oman.

The Agreement will generate export opportunities for U.S. companies, farmers, and ranchers, help create jobs in the United States, and help American consumers save money while offering them more choices. Entering into an FTA with Oman will build on the FTAs that we already have with Israel, Jordan, and Morocco, as well as the FTA that we have concluded with Bahrain, and will be an important step on the path to fulfilling my vision of developing economic growth and democracy in the Middle East and creating a U.S.—Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) by 2013.

Consistent with the Trade Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the FTA. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress in developing appropriate legislation to approve and implement this Agreement.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, October 17, 2005.

ON THE IRAQ VOTE

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the Washington Post has done it again for us. They ran an article on the retirement of Turkey's ambassador to the United States, and I was struck by a comment that the ambassador made regarding Iraq and our efforts to reshape that country in the Middle East.

This is what he said: "Pessimism debilitates you. Don't ignore the facts, but be optimistic. Some of the apparent clumsiness is democracy in the making." Democracy in the making.

Mr. Speaker, too many in this body and in the media have fed the pessimism. Those of us standing with the President and our military in Iraq are not playing Pollyanna on this. We know it is going to be a tough, tough endeavor. But we believed and we still believe that failing to act was a poor long-term solution to the fundamental crisis of terrorism that exists in the Middle East.

Today, we should all take a moment and praise our troops, our leadership, and the Iraqi people for voting on a constitution last Saturday. Nearly 63 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot. That is tremendous, and it should be cause for celebration both here and around the world.

Again, to quote the ambassador, "Pessimism debilitates you." Let us celebrate this success.

STOP ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, illegal immigration is a huge concern to the vast majority of Americans. Some States are welcoming illegal aliens with driver's licenses, in-State college tuition, and access to social services. One has to wonder how can this be. It appears to many that we are rewarding those that break the laws.

Whoever said crime does not pay must not have been talking about those who enter our country illegally. Crossing the border illegally is a criminal act; however, we give these people access to everything you can imagine. Lax enforcement of our immigration policies is making every day payday for illegal aliens.

States other than Texas, Arizona, and California are now more burdened than ever picking up the tab for illegal aliens, with Georgia, my home State, ranking in the top 10 with illegal alien populations.

Hospitals and others are being forced to scrape the bottom of the barrel to look for money, money that should be spent on American citizens and those here legally.

Mr. Speaker, not tomorrow, not the day after that, not next week, not next month, but today, today is the time to stop illegal immigration. H.R. 3693 will do just that.

IRAQ ELECTION ON CONSTITUTION

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, as the representative of the 48th Brigade and the 3rd Infantry Division, I have thousands of constituents in Iraq. I look each day, as most Americans do, for good news to come from that area of the world; and good news did come this weekend with their unprecedented election.

This election, which had a lot of high stakes, will hopefully, when the tally is counted, ratify their constitution, which so many have worked on in the international community for so long.

The election itself, though, was a great success, with an over-60 percent turnout. In over 6,000 different polling places, violence was absent. Compare that to the June election, when there

was a lot more absence and a lot less participation. This Saturday was a success.

Even the Sunni population, the minority population that has a lot of apprehension about this constitution, showed up in record numbers. And, remember, they boycotted the election in June.

There is a lot of progress that is happening in Iraq. I hope that this constitution does pass. I hope that the elections in December are a success. I hope that the new national government takes hold and does a great job of moving this great country to democracy.

America has made this possible, and America is standing behind our friends in Iraq.

□ 1730

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise to recognize October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Thankfully, we have made progress in raising awareness and attention of domestic violence and providing assistance to the affected victims. However, it is a problem that has not gone away.

We must not forget about these crimes that disrupt homes and destroy families. It is estimated that over 2 million acts of domestic violence take place each year here in the United States. According to a recent study in my home State of Kansas, one domestic violence act occurs every 24 minutes.

Domestic violence is an issue that affects all aspects of our society and is not bound by race, economics or age. It can be blamed for increased medical care costs, decreased productivity, and increased absence from work. Domestic violence also promotes a culture of depression, hopelessness and fear. One incidence of domestic violence can create a cycle of despair that is difficult for not only the victim but also the entire family to overcome.

In my small hometown of Plainville, Kansas, a family grieves over the loss of their daughter. Patty Kruse-Hicks, a kind, loving daughter, and a devoted mother to her three children, lost her life due to domestic violence. On April 19, 2004, the world changed forever for her family and all those who loved her. Patty is more than a statistic. Her legacy and love will live in the hearts of